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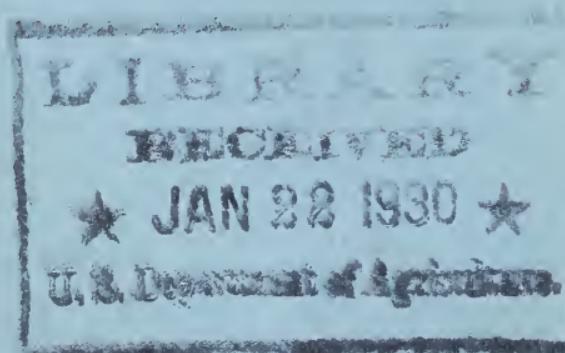
# CLATER'S DELPHINIUM SUPERB

"STANDARD - SUPREME"

Mass.

Victor O. B. Slater

IT'S  
CULTURE









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## FOREWORD.

"And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden; and the Lord God took the man He had made and put him into the garden to dress it and to keep it." Such is the goodly heritage of the gardener. And as the garden years pass it is only natural that some favoritism be shown. So it was that my favor was showered on the Delphinium.

Unique among hardy flowers it is absolutely so in the towering of its tall spikes to a height of six or even eight feet. Today it is the admired of thousands; ere long it will be the plant of the million, providing rich clouds of blue and violet and white flowers in a never ending variety, and without a rival in the world.

After experimenting with seeds from all recognized growers in America and Europe for the past seven years we have developed a race of Delphiniums which can not be equalled. In order to keep our plant and seed stock superior we are continually trying out the newest novelties grown by world-renowned hybridizers, both in this country and abroad.

Our Test and Exhibition garden which contains over 200 specimen plants furnish hybridizing material and seed which is carefully gathered and classified. Our Delphinium field a block away is painstakingly watched and no plants sold until after blooms are examined and inferior plants destroyed. This method leaves an average of 5000 plants for the trade, and we are always sold out early in the Spring.

Seed from the finest varieties in Delphiniums from Holland, France and England as well as the noted Wrexham strain and Hood-acres of this country were used to develop the Slater Delphinium, and we are sure you will agree that none better exists, regardless of price.

“Why do you not increase your yearly output?” many ask. For just this reason: Delphinium growing is our hobby, not our livelihood, and quality is our chief aim. We hire no help. All the seed planting, transplanting, spraying, cutting, digging, packing, classifying and gathering of seed is done by Mrs. Slater and myself, with the help of our small daughter, Faith. Working with the Delphinium opens up a world of pleasure, and we love our plants. May you too, grow to know and love the beauty of this exquisite flower—the NEW HYBRID DELPHINIUM!



## SEEDS.

Delphinium seeds germinate quicker and with a very high germination percentage if sown shortly after maturing in August. Fresh seed should germinate within two weeks. Within 60 days the tiny seedlings should show true leaves and be ready for transplanting in frames for the winter or in permanent quarters in the garden.

Delphiniums do not bloom true to seed. From a packet of dark doubles might be produced dark doubles, light doubles, dark singles, dark doubles with many shades between. However, from fine flowers surrounded by only the best, the resulting seeds sometimes produce marvelous specimens.

While many growers state that seed is just as good the following spring as when absolutely fresh, we find that the germination percentage is not so good. With this in mind, we always send extra seed in the packets for spring sowing. April sown seed will bloom the same year in September or October.

Growing Delphiniums from seed is a fascinating pastime. Use your own good judgement, follow the method shown in this little manual, and you will be the owner of a collection of these flowers hard to describe. Our seeds are hand-picked from the lower half of each flower spike. Our propagating plants are by themselves in our small cottage garden. There are no ordinary Delphiniums to our knowledge growing within a half mile radius. We therefore guarantee our seed to be the equal of any seed offered anywhere in the world.

## PLANTING THE SEED IN THE OPEN.

When growing Delphiniums from seed it is best to prepare a quantity of light, porous soil. Mix 2 parts soil, 1 part sand, and 1 part humus or leaf mold. Any good garden soil will do if porous. Sift the soil into a flat, bulb pan or directly into a cold frame.

We advise watering the soil thoroughly and allowing same to drain before planting the seed.

If troubled with damping off scatter powdered charcoal on seed flat or spray with Semesan or Qua-Sul.

Sow the seed broadcast or in very shallow drills and cover not more than  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch. Press down evenly with a board. DO NOT SOW TOO DEEPLY. Keep shaded and moist. Allow plenty of air but no drying winds. DO NOT ALLOW THE SEED TO DRY OUT.

When true leaves appear transplant into cold frames or permanent positions, providing the soil is well drained. Where winters are uncertain and severe (as in New England) leave the seedlings in airy cold frames until spring.

Use bone meal as a fertilizer in the Delphinium bed. It is not necessary to use any fertilizer in the seed soil. Snails are fond of young seedlings. If these pests become troublesome, place coarse sand around the plants. If you visit the seed beds at night with a flash light you can catch them at work and kill them!

### **PLANTING THE SEED IN THE GREENHOUSE.**

Prepare flats the same as for out-doors. Place in a cool portion of the house, and keep dark. Keep the temperature no higher than 60 degrees. When the seedlings have sprouted remove to a lighter position but keep shaded from the hot sun until the true leaves appear. When the true leaves appear, transplant in pots or flats. They may be allowed to grow on in the seed flat if not too crowded until weather is suitable for outside planting at which time they may be placed by themselves or in their permanent positions.

We use lattice and cloth-covered sashes for our cold frame coverings in the Fall.

## TREATMENT OF YOUNG PLANTS.

The tiny seedlings will grow quicker after being transplanted. When plants are about 6 inches high, spray once every two weeks with a solution of  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound of lime-sulphur to 3 gallons of water until and even after the flower spike forms, being careful not to spray the flower part of the spike. Black-Leaf 40 can be mixed with the above preparation with excellent results—1 tablespoonful to the above mixture and be sure that the frames are well sprayed. We have also used Qua-sul and Semesan with good results.

Delphiniums may be planted either in beds of formal character, or in irregular clumps or masses, or at intervals in the mixed border. It is all important that they have room to obtain their proper quota of air and sunshine. Overcrowding is fatal to its success. There should be at least 18 inches to 2 feet between each two specimens.

After painstaking planting of valuable seed and the careful transplanting of promising seedlings you will find this treatment as a precaution against wet weather and unfavorable soil conditions well worth your while.

## WHEN FLOWER SPIKES FORM.

Staking the tall, robust hybrid Delphinium spikes is a necessity to prevent breaking down in times of storm. The best method is to use one slender bamboo cane or wire cane to each spike. These canes should be as tall as the spike when in flower, stout at the base but with tapering ends so the tops will allow a certain amount of play while the base remains firm. Tie with raffia, starting either just below or at the point above where the leaf joins the stem. Thin out the spikes as you tie up, discarding any weak spikes and retaining the strong ones. Not only will this improve the plant itself, but it will strengthen the remaining spikes and florets. By using one stake to each

flower spike the whole plant may be effectively secured, the natural form of the plant maintained, and, if neatly done, no stakes will be discernable a short distance away.

### AS A CUT FLOWER.

As a cut flower, the Belladonna, with its small, slender stems and pale blue, white-eyed flowers seems at present to be the favored type. The flowers lend themselves beautifully to ordinary purposes of decoration, and for the modern vogue of the Delphinium bouquet. Still, for bold decorative schemes for large dining rooms, halls, or for public functions, the big spikes are extremely serviceable and produce imposing effects.

For such decoration cut the fully developed flowers, clipping off any seed pods that may have formed at the base of the spikes, and while leaving sufficient foliage to serve as a setting to the flowers remove all lower leaves, which, if left on, will drain the whole spike of too great a proportion of the moisture it contains. Always cut these spikes at late afternoon and place them in a cool, dark place deep in water. A set tub is ideal for this. The next morning they may be packed for shipment or placed in receptacles for home decoration and their lasting qualities will be surprising. Keep cut flowers out of drafts.

### AFTER FLOWERING.

One of two grave mistakes is often made when the Delphinium blooms have lost their beauty. One is to leave the faded spikes to weaken the root-stock by developing a vast amount of seed, and the other is to cut the whole growth—flower spike and foliage—almost to the ground. The proper procedure after flowering is to cut the stem just far enough below the basal flower spike to allow the end of the stem remaining to be hidden by foliage. The stems thus cut, if not hollow at the point of severance, soon will be, so

take some wet soil, squeeze it in the palm of the hand and plaster over the end of the cut stem. By thus sealing the ends of the stems the danger of rain getting in is removed, and also of the stems harboring various insects. I sometimes drop some lime-sulphur in the hollow stem. Soon another flower spike will appear and a second bloom will make its appearance during August.

### **DISEASES.**

There are three fungoid diseases which sometimes prove the bane of the Delphinium grower. These are MILDEW, BLACK SPOT and BLACK ROT or WILT.

#### **MILDEW.**

For mildew (that grayish-white condition which causes the leaves to shrivel up and the flowers to discolor) dust lightly with lime-sulphur or spray with liquid lime-sulphur, or qua-sul about once every ten days beginning as soon as the plants are above ground and continuing until the flower buds form. If the above method is used not only will mildew be prevented, but the dreaded black rot or wilt is not likely to appear, especially if the crowns of the plant have received their full share of the spray.

#### **BLACK SPOT.**

When black spots appear on the leaves of a plant we say it has developed the disease called black spot. Another indication of this disease is the forming of a discolored bluish-black mass at the end of the flower spike which gives it a stunted appearance. Lime-sulphur used as a dust or spray will quickly remedy this fault and in a surprisingly short time the flower spike will come thru this black mass in all its beauty.

#### **BLACK ROT.**

In cold, heavy soils a black rot fungus sometimes appears on the base of the stems, which, if neglected, penetrates to the crown of the plant and causes decay of the root-

stock. This malady, which is called black rot or crown rot or wilt has been successfully prevented by the following method: When the plant has been lifted to be transplanted dust around the crown and top roots with a mixture of 4 parts lime-sulphur, 4 parts bordeaux and 2 parts fine tobacco dust. After setting the plant in the ground dust over the crown with powdered charcoal. I have found that plants already started on their way to the black rot grave yard responded to this treatment after the decayed part had been cut out and a wire-worm nest removed. On one occasion after this operation was performed I had one piece of root and one shoot, but it repayed me and a healthy plant was the result.

Spraying the crowns with Semesan or Qua-Sul or the lime-sulphur solution previously mentioned will help to prevent any of the aforementioned troubles.

## INSECTS.

Among insects that crawl on the surface of the soil the most troublesome to Delphiniums are cut-worms and snails. What disappointment and irritation besets an enthusiast when he finds that the entire center of the crown has been gnawed clean away by some glutinous snail! Seedling beds, too, suffer from cut-worms if no steps are taken to combat them. Bran, powdered alum and soot are recommended to rid the ground of snails, but after careful planting it is worth one's while to hunt them at night with a flashlight. Poison bran is a sure remedy for cut-worms and a plentiful use of lime-sulphur and sometimes soot will keep them in check.

## PREVENTATIVES.

A good preventative, (an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure), is a 25% solution of semesan—one ounce of semesan to three gallons of water. Use a pint to

each plant. Spray over the crown as the plants come thru in the spring and again two or three times during the growing season if the plant looks in any way unusual. Semesan, I have found to act as a cure, too, if used in the early stages. The aforementioned remedies are also good as preventatives.

## SOIL.

Delphiniums thrive in a non-acid soil. Many Delphinium ills may be traced to a too acid soil due to excessive manuring, abnormally wet atmospheric conditions, or to mulching leaves dug into the soil while too green. Sometimes the origin of the trouble lies in the seedling bed, the sour soil apparently not affecting the plants till they mature.

As a remedy, if not too badly affected, dust the foliage and crowns with lime-sulphur, dig up the plant and dip the roots, cleansing them thoroughly in a solution of one-quarter pound lime-sulphur to three gallons of water. Replant in a non-acid soil. If the plants are too badly affected, discard. Lime the soil and let it rest. Apply bone meal before using the land for planting again.

## FOR SUCCESSFUL DELPHINIUM GROWING.

1. If you must use manure, use sparingly and only when well rotted.
2. Leaves before using as a mulch must be rotted to the substance of leaf mold.
3. Use bone meal when planting seedlings and lime-sulphur or before mentioned sprays religiously every two weeks during the growing season.
4. A good top dressing for Delphinium is wood ashes and bone meal in equal parts.

**Note:** We do not claim that the above methods, cures and preventatives are the only ones. They have been tried out by us

and found most successful. When simpler formulas have been tried and proven trustworthy, they will be broadcast to you, our clients and friends.

#### Terms—Rules.

1. No plant order filled for less than \$2.50. No seed order filled for less than \$1.00.

2. All plants sent by express, F. O. B., New Bedford. When convenient, we sometimes deliver large orders personally within 50 miles.

3. We do not open accounts except to those known to us. Send money order, check or draft.

4. We guarantee our plants to be as represented. Hybrid Delphinium seed does not with certainty bloom true to the parent color. Plants are usually sold in mixture as they come in the field. All classified varieties are plainly marked with our label showing color and any unusual characteristic.

5. We have seen plants advertised by American nurserymen as "Advancement, Coquette, Monarch of Wales, Queen Mauve, The Bishop" etc. They offer these plants at such prices as \$10.00 each. They also offer seed of these at from \$3.00 to \$10.00 per packet. I want all my Delphinium friends to know that these named plants originated in England. Even if we, in this country, offered a million dollars for one of these plants it would be almost impossible to import it successfully, on account of the Foreign Plant Embargo treatment, and time in transit. We can procure the seed—but as Delphiniums do not with certainty bloom true to the parent plant,—what right has any grower to mislead garden lovers in this way? You can compare with description, but plants can only be true to name if grown from cuttings or divisions from the parent plant.

6. You will find these same names in our list of classified varieties—BUT—this name is in parenthesis. This indicates that this plant was obtained from seed of this variety, and from hundreds of progeny this plant comes nearest to its written description. Those with our own name were propagated by us and will eventually be placed on the market with a suitable name. As propagating is from cuttings or divisions, this is necessarily slow.

### WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER. PLANTS.

We do not offer seedlings for sale. A few plants bloom with small florets, poor color or peculiar habit, which is true of all hybrids in the floral kingdom. These are quickly weeded from our field. All plants coming up to the Slater standard — SLATER'S SUPERB — Standard - Supreme — are carefully watched as they come into bloom in late summer and early fall. They are shipped in the fall and early spring as long as the supply lasts. Each year we have been obliged to refuse many orders, but have only limited time and limited space and so this is inevitable. A limited number of quality plants, quickly sold to satisfied customers we have made an asset. Five thousand Hybrid Delphiniums are almost more than enough for the personal supervision of one small family.

*Plants in mixture (as they come in the field)*  
\$5.00 per dozen.

*Plants selected as to color, etc., the finest in Delphiniums, regardless of price, guaranteed.*

\$1.00 each — \$10.00 per dozen.

Plants—new named Wrexhams in our Test Garden are being propagated by root divisions.

None for sale this year.

## SEEDS 1928—1929.

### WHITES.

Seedling 20 (**Hoodacre**) Double. White with a white eye. Lovely thick spike with large flowers.

Seedling 35 (**Lemoine**) Double. Medium eye. Long, narrow, full spike.

Seedling 70 (**Slater**) Single Creamy white. Belladonna center. Green dot on each petal. Very long, Wrexham type spike.

### DOUBLE BLUES.

Seedling 5 (**Lady Elizabeth**) Sky blue outer petals. Pink inner petals. White eye.

Seedling 30 (**The Bishop**) Violet and blue. White eye. Very showy.

Seedling 45 (**Advancement**) Outer petals blue, inner petals purple. Medium eye.

Seedling 55 (**Slater**) Very dark purple self. White center. Very showy. Similar to the famous new Violet Robinson.

Seedling 65 (**Slater**) Blue outer petals. Pink inner petals. Dark eye. Florets very compact.

Seedling 70 (**Slater**) Belladonna blue outer petals. Pinkish mauve inner petals. White eye. Very full, beautiful spike.

Seedling 80 (**Slater**) Very pale blue self. Black and blue striped center. Lovely.

Seedling 85 (**Slater**) Clear electric blue with a pale mauve center. Khaki eye. Very large flower.

Seedling 90 (**Slater**) Bright cornflower blue. Each floret tinged with pink. Black and gold eye.

Seedling 95 (**Countess Cowley**) Turquoise blue outer petals. Deep mauve inner petals. Black eye. Large flat florets.

Seedling 100 (**Wales**) Very dark purple self. Black eye.

Seedling 110 (**Norah Phillips**) Deep blue

and pinkish mauve. White eye. Very large flowers.

Seedling 130 (**Slater**) Pale blue and mauve. White eye. Florets beautifully placed on stem.

Seedling 140 (**Slater**) Lovely color scheme. Clear old blue with small pink inner petals. Huge black center striped mauve. Center appears like a large bee.

Seedling 150 (**Monarch of All**) Richest violet purple. Brown eye.

Seedling 160 (**Slater**) Huge spike of large flowers of pale blue and mauve. Small sepia eye.

Seedling 165 (**Great Strides**) Iridescent effect with very pale blue and pink coloring. Eye large and black. Distinctive.

Seedling 175 (**Slater**) Dresden. Very full flower of medium size. Pink with narrow edge of blue. Center of many striped blue and white sepals.

Seedling 195 (**Hoodacre**) Very pale blue touched with mauve. Belladonna center.

Seedling 205 (**Slater**) Very large sky blue rosette. Variegated eye.

Seedling 215 (**Slater**) Purple effect. White eye striped purple. Very full flower spike.

Seedling 220 (**Slater**) Medium blue outer petals. Lavender inner striped with brown. Large dark center.

Seedling 225 (**Slater**) Small flower. Flat rosette. Sky blue with dark eye. Dainty.

## SINGLE BLUES.

Seedling 10 (**St. George**) A long tapering spike of rich gentian blue with black eye. One of the few real blues in the Wrexham class.

Seedling 15 (**Clive Greaves**) Rich porcelain blue flower 3 inches across on a strong tapering spike of imposing stature. Brown eye. Unique and distinct.

Seedling 25 (**Constance**) Pale blue. White eye. Lovely.

Seedling 60 (**Hoodacre**) Azure blue tinged with pink. White eye.

Seedling 75 (**Slater**) Same as 60 with a black eye.

Seedling 120 (**Slater**) Medium blue. Petals curled. Unique. Hyacinth flowered.

Seedling 125 (**Slater**) Light blue with pink shadings. Opalescent. Gold center.

Seedling 135 (**Slater**) Same as 125 with white center.

Seedling 145 (**Slater**) Turquoise blue. Mauve edges. Large light brown center.

Seedling 155 (**Hoodacre**) Opalescent with white eye.

#### MAUVES.

Seedling 50 (**Slater**) Medium mauve or lavender pink self. Medium eye.

Seedling 180 (**Mrs. Newton Lees**) Almost clear pink with white eye. 8 feet tall. 3 inch florets.

Seedling 200 (**Lady Edith-Awarded A. M. R. H. S. 1926**) Charming shade of lavender with large black eye.

Seedling 210 (**Slater**) Clear medium mauve. Dark eye. Very beautiful.

*Seeds from these plants — classified or in mixture — \$1.00 per packet of over 100 seeds.*

#### CUT FLOWERS.

Hybrid Delphinium, Belladonna and Bellamoxum Delphinium cut flowers sold when in season.

#### EXHIBITIONS.

Our propagating and test garden is open to all lovers of Delphinium during the blooming season—usually mid-July.

#### LECTURE.

Illustrated lecture, "The New Hybrid Delphinium." Terms given on request.

## LETTER EXTRACTS.

I have never seen Delphiniums quite like yours. I will take all you can spare.  
H. M. S. Landscape Architect. — Boston,  
Mass.

The Delphiniums arrived in excellent condition—nicely packed and moist. I am looking forward to them with a great deal of pleasure.

E. H.—Wilmington, Delaware.

I truly believe your Delphiniums are as large in size and as beautiful in coloring as any I have been privileged to see.

Mrs. J. G. B. Garden Consultant—Fairhaven,  
Mass.

Plants arrived this forenoon in perfect condition. Am well satisfied with them.

L. S. F. Jr.—Milwaukee, Illinois.

I received the Delphiniums in very fine condition. The roots were moist and cool and I must say the finest I ever bought.

M. L. W.—Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Delphs arrived in fine condition. They are wonderful plants. They have been planted and are not even wilted.

F. L. R., Garden Builder—Stuyvesant, N. Y.

All the plants you sent me were twice as large as others we have bought. All had an excellent root system, so large in fact, that I was forced to dig the holes in setting them out with a small shovel.

A. C. P.—East Lynn, Mass.

Delphiniums arrived yesterday in very good shape.

L. C. M.—Jacksonville, Florida.

## MY DELPHINIUM.

As Eve strolled through her garden  
    In ages long ago,  
She found one color missing  
    Altho 'twas just aglow;  
And gazing upward in the sky  
    She had but one desire—  
To see those blues reflected  
    In a gorgeous flower-spire.

God saw her wistful smile,  
    As she looked up at Him,  
And taking bits from heaven,  
    He gently dug them in;  
Blues of pleasant days there were,  
    And darker blues of storms;  
Pink of sunsets, white of clouds,  
    And palest mauve of dawns.

Then, passing through the garden,  
    She sighed with deep content,  
For there amidst the blossoms  
    Were hues from Heaven sent;  
Tall and stately as the lilies,  
    The hardy larkspurs grew.  
The garden was complete—  
    For He'd made you!

—Bertha S. Slater. 1929.

VICTOR O. B. SLATER

*Delphinium Specialist*

32 Elm Avenue      Fairhaven, Mass.  
U. S. A.

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*Member*

American Delphinium Society  
British Delphinium Society  
Massachusetts Horticultural Society

